

# The Rubenianum Quarterly

2019  
2

## Summer Course for the Study of the Arts in Flanders: 'The Age of Bruegel in Context', 23 June–3 July 2019

It's that time of the year again! Over the past days, the fifth edition of the Summer Course for the Study of the Arts in Flanders roamed *le plat pays* in a quest for Bruegel and his contemporaries.

The Summer Course is a joint organization of several leading Flemish research centres, museums and universities, with the Rubenianum as the proud initiating partner. This intensive eleven-day course aims at offering eighteen selected participants – international promising early-career researchers – a unique and highly immersive learning opportunity. Centred around five rotating periods and topics in Flemish art history, the course combines lectures by specialists with visits to museum galleries, print rooms, conservation studios as well as private collections. Historical monuments, research institutes and archives complete the programme, and interaction and discussion – whenever possible in front of the works of art – is stimulated throughout the Summer Course. This experience helps to shape participants' ideas and projects, as well as their professional networks.

This year, the focus was – quite appropriately – on Pieter Bruegel the Elder and the fascinating sixteenth century. Composed by Antwerp's Royal Museum of Fine Arts, the Rubenianum and the Flemish Art Collection, the programme took us to collections in Antwerp, Bruges, Leuven, Brussels and even Bokrijk and Paris – all of this in the midst of an almost apocalyptic heatwave. As in previous years, we were blessed with a group of high potentials of ten nationalities, all working on diverse research topics related to early modern Netherlandish Art, portrayed here on the opening day.

In 2020, the Groeningemuseum will coordinate the course on 'The Age of Van Eyck in Context'. In a year in which Van Eyck and the *Ghent Altarpiece* will generate much public attention, and where results of years of research will be shared, the next edition promises to become a not-to-be-missed event for international PhD students in the field. | *Véronique Van de Kerckhof*



## Crossing the Alps: a rich autumn conference programme

*Since the Middle Ages, the Low Countries and Italy have been among the most innovative urbanized regions – both economically and artistically – in the Western world. Gaining momentum from the Quattrocento onwards, artistic exchanges across the Alps culminated in the fundamental role played by Italian art and culture in Rubens's development, while remaining a decisive factor throughout the tradition of the Grand Tour. In the case of Rubens, six solid volumes of the Corpus Rubenianum are devoted to his copies after Italian artists, but, in fact, Italian art features prominently in every single tome of the Corpus.*

*This coming autumn, the artistic exchange between Italy and the Low Countries is celebrated in an exceptionally rich scholarly programme, accompanying the upcoming 'From Titian to Rubens' show in Venice. The Rubenianum opens this cycle with its symposium on 'Artistic Relations between Antwerp and Genoa' on 20 September, followed one week later by the two-day 'Bruegel in Italy' colloquium at the Accademia Belgica in Rome. Also at the Accademia Belgica, a colloquium on 5–6 December will conclude the 'Early Modern Prints from the Low Countries in Italian Collections' project, the results of which will, at a later point, also be presented in the Rubenianum for our local networks and partners. One week later, the RKD – Netherlands Institute of Art History schedules the symposium 'Going South. Artistic Exchange between the Netherlands and Italy in the Early Modern Period', as part of its Gerson Italy Project. In between these events for our scholarly communities, the 2019 Rubenianum Fund Fieldtrip will take its members quite appropriately to Mantua and Milan – a report of which will be published in our next issue.*

*The Rubenianum is happy to kick off this season of international gatherings with a compelling programme of lectures and a book presentation. Keep an eye on our website for more details and online registration. It goes without saying that the topic of Flemish–Italian artistic exchanges offers many more options and angles, which we will continue to explore. But for now, enjoy a colourful cultural autunno in Antwerp, Rome and The Hague.*

*Véronique Van de Kerckhof,  
Director of the Rubenianum*

Valérie Herremans on her recent *Corpus Rubenianum* volume (XX.4):

## Rubens's designs for Architectural Sculpture

*The fact that Rubens's designs for architectural sculpture – altarpiece surrounds and memorials – are hardly known to the general public does not affect their art-historical interest, quite the contrary. Indeed, this part of the artist's oeuvre raises many questions for art historians.*

The numerous gaps in our knowledge about this very specific aspect of Rubens's activity have given rise to very different points of view. The purpose of this catalogue was not limited to drawing up a state of affairs and the presentation of new information. The need was felt for a general art-historical framework to support the interpretation of this lesser-known aspect of Rubens's oeuvre and help to re-examine for future research unanswered questions concerning a significant amount of lost design material.

An important factor that largely determines the various questions is that Rubens – in much the same way as with his drawings for engravings and tapestries – did not execute his designs. As a designer of architectural sculpture he had to reckon with other contenders who, unlike himself, had practical experience in the field: sculptor-architects, court architects and architects of religious orders such as the Jesuit Pieter Huyssens. Research has revealed that it was not easy for Rubens to find his place among these other candidates.

It is fascinating to see that the Rubens we meet here is a different kind of artist from the dyed-in-the-wool painter who effortlessly took on assignment after assignment. After his return from Italy it took Rubens several years to establish himself as a designer of the surrounds of the altarpieces he executed. The year 1617 – the very year in which, according to J. Richard Judson and Carl Van de Velde, he first achieved his full creative potential in the design of title-pages – was crucial in this respect. In that year Hans van Mildert signed the contract for the execution of the high altar of the Kapellekerk (Notre-Dame de la Chapelle) in Brussels. It was the first portico to be made entirely after a model by Rubens's hand. In contrast to this first executed design, problems often arose with such high-cost projects whose realization was often considerably delayed. This is evident from the fact that many of Rubens's designs were not or only partially realized.

From the very beginnings of his activity in this field, Rubens's designs for architectural sculpture were strongly interwoven with his other work. This can be traced back to the theoretical foundations

of his artistic views. For Rubens the study of classical sculpture was essential to the education of young painters. He was nevertheless convinced that the art of painting had more options than sculpture to depict the human body. He developed his own pictorial technique using both grisaille and brunaille to represent the anatomy of sculptures as if they were living bodies. In a similar way he studied the essence of Vitruvian architectural ornament with a view to mastering the accurate rendering of architecture in two dimensions. Naturally, he applied this knowledge in the first place in his paintings. But it also enabled him to develop his own idiom of architectural sculpture, an idiom which he was to apply in his designs not only for title-pages or ephemeral decorations but also for architectural sculpture.

Applying these theoretical ideas in his painting practice while also supplying models for architectural sculpture, Rubens entered virgin territory. Next to drawn models, he introduced the *disegno colorito* in the design of architectural sculpture. The elaborate painted modelli he used to make for his paintings were an absolute novelty in architectural sculpture design practice, all the more so when the altarpiece that was to adorn the altar surround (and would be executed by his own hand) was included. His designs provided potential patrons with previously unseen 'previews' of the project they had in mind.

Two further principles drawing on Rubens's pictorial design practice strongly mark the present catalogue. On the one hand there is the use of partial designs alongside overall designs; on the other hand mention should be made of the reuse of inventions for commissions other than the initial one. This was done not only by Rubens himself but also by others who worked together with him on the design and execution of architectural sculpture, in particular Hans van Mildert and Pieter Huyssens. Rubens made separate models of the individual sculptural elements in his overall designs, one example being the monumental angels that were meant to decorate the high altar and

the façade of the Antwerp Jesuit Church (see CRLB XXII.3 *Architecture and Sculpture. The Jesuit Church of Antwerp*). Several of these inventions were reused afterwards in other projects that are covered by the present catalogue.

Inspired by antiquity and by Michelangelo among others, Rubens made various highly innovative designs for architectural sculpture. However, these designs met with little response during his lifetime. The influence he exerted in this particular field was mainly passed on by workshop assistants and pupils. Erasmus II Quellinus, who produced designs for his brother, the sculptor Artus I Quellinus, and sculptor-architect Lucas Faydherbe – both of them well acquainted with Rubens's formal language, theoretical views and studio practice – disseminated the Rubensian legacy through their own oeuvre. Their design methods and interpretations of Rubens's inventions were among the major founding factors that brought about the flourishing of architectural sculpture in the Southern Netherlands during the second half of the seventeenth century.



Hans van Mildert after a design by Rubens, High Altar of the Kapellekerk in Brussels. Approx. 1120 × 560 × 140 cm. Sint-Joost-ten-Node (Brussels), Church of St Judoc (with a copy of Rubens's original altarpiece)

# Two rediscovered oil sketches by Abraham van Diepenbeek

Adam Sammut, PhD candidate, University of York, UK



Fig. 1 Abraham van Diepenbeek, *The Scourging of St Paul*, c.1633. Oil on panel, 21.6 x 19.7 cm. Private collection. © Christie's

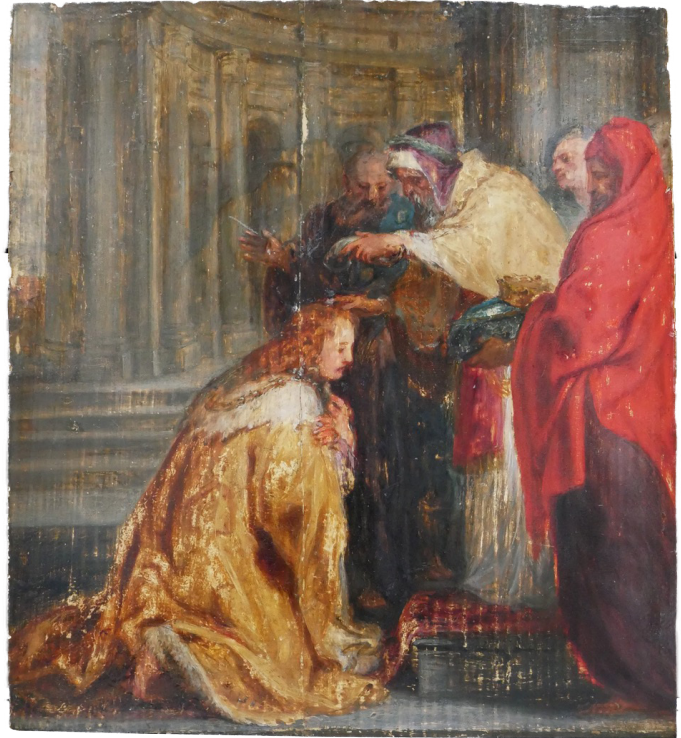


Fig. 2 Abraham van Diepenbeek, *The Anointing of King David*. Oil on panel, 28.3 x 23 cm. Private collection

Abraham van Diepenbeek (1596–1675) was a Brabantian artist in the Rubensian mould. After introducing a new monumentality to stained-glass painting in Antwerp, he worked across media, designing engravings and tapestries. This article looks at two rediscovered oil sketches by this neglected master in a private collection in London. One of these was for a lost window in the choir of the Dominican Church, today St Paul's (figs. 1–2).

Born in 's-Hertogenbosch, Van Diepenbeek joined the Antwerp Guild of St Luke as a stained-glass painter (*gelaesschryver*) in 1622–23. The same decade, he received commissions from Antwerp City Council and the Calced Carmelites. On 25 May 1633, Van Diepenbeek agreed to paint windows for the new choir in St Paul's. The exact details of the original contract are not known. Nevertheless, eighteenth-century descriptions consistently mention ten windows in the choir depicting the life of St Paul, which Jacob de Wit and others have attributed to Van Diepenbeek. Records show that in 1637 not all of these were in place. However, a *terminus ante quem* was August 1639, when the Bishop of Antwerp dedicated the high altar to St Paul.

Due in part to the French Revolutionary occupation, the choir stands bereft of its former ornament. On either side of the choir are five large blank windows of equal dimensions (fig. 3). To judge from anecdotal evidence, Van Diepenbeek's windows to the north were bought by English dealers

in the early nineteenth century. Those to the south bore the brunt of an artillery explosion during the Siege of Antwerp in 1830, sharing the fate of Jan de Labaer's *Triumph of Jerusalem* window in the south transept. Not a single stained-glass panel from the choir is known to survive.

The iconographic programme can be reconstructed with accuracy. The *Verzameling der graf- en gedenkschriften* describes the iconography and placement of three windows along the south side before their destruction or dismantlement. Oil sketches for five of the windows either were recorded or still physically exist. In the choir of the Dominican Church, the life of St Paul was read left to right in two phases, from transept to high altar.

### South side:

- The Conversion of Saul (St Paul)
- The Baptism of Saul
- The Escape from Damascus
- The Sacrifice at Lystra
- The Scourging of St Paul (fig. 1).

### North side:

- St Paul in Prison\*
- St Paul Preaching at Athens\*
- St Paul Healing a Young Man (Eutychus)
- St Paul on Malta (fig. 4)
- The Martyrdom of St Paul.\*

The above programme, selected from the Acts of the Apostles and the *Golden Legend*, combined miracles and persecution in roughly equal measure. St Paul was chosen as the church's patron partly because his life reflected the monastery's history and values. Like St Paul, the Order were persecuted by 'heathens', namely Calvinists, who in the 1580s built a street through the original choir and banished the friars from Antwerp. Like St Paul also, Dominicans were preacher-apostles whose mission was to convert unbelievers.

Episodes highlighted with an asterisk (\*) lack documentation but were the most likely to have been included. For example, the cycle had to include St Paul Preaching. This episode and St Paul in Prison formed part of the *Acts of the Apostles*, a tapestry series woven by Philip Wauters and designed by Van Diepenbeek. Decades before Theodor Boeyermans's high altarpiece on the subject was installed in St Paul's (Église de la Madeleine, Aix-en-Provence), the martyrdom of St Paul was the obvious choice for the

final window, which faced the high altar. Consecrated with relics of Roman martyrs in honour of the Eternal City's second patron saint, the iconographic scheme flaunted the monastery's supra-Catholic ambitions as the papacy's northernmost representatives on the front line of the Eighty Years War. Under the direction of Michiel Ophovius, former Bishop of 's-Hertogenbosch, whose arms were painted above the *Sacrifice at Lystra*, the spirit of St Paul was summoned to fortify the church as a Catholic bulwark in the event of a Protestant invasion.

In March 2019, Van Diepenbeeck's oil sketch *St Paul on Malta* was auctioned at Koller, Zurich, for 72,500 CHF (fig. 4). Renewed interest in the series has brought two further oil sketches onto the market: the *Scourging of St Paul*, on sale at Christie's London on 5 July (fig. 1); and the *Anointing of King David* (fig. 2). The window depicting the Scourging of St Paul was donated by Joannes Malderus, Bishop of Antwerp, whose arms were displayed in the glass above. Otherwise, the sketch is not included in David Steadman's 1982 monograph. The *Anointing of King David*, catalogued as no. 44, was last seen in 1953.

The surviving sketches for St Paul's choir, which also include *St Paul Healing a Young Man* (Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY) and two versions of the *Conversion of Saul* (Alte Pinakothek, Munich, and a private collection), have a recognizable format. A Rubensian *mêlée* of figures against a background of grandiose architecture in perspective seems to have been the template. Before paint was applied, a grid was scored into the wood, generally measuring five by four. This may have been in preparation for a scaled-up transfer, or so Van Diepenbeeck could demonstrate to the authorities – namely, a panel of experts – that his designs were feasible for monumental stained glass.

The *Scourging of St Paul* depicts an

episode from Acts 14, whereby Jews from Antioch and Iconium stoned the apostle and dragged him out of Lystra with the help of an angry mob; his companion Barnabas follows to the right. Hordes of massed unbelievers form the backdrop, together with various classical edifices.

The *Anointing of King David* follows 1 Samuel 16. The composition is much simpler than the *Scourging*. Against an exploded classical rotunda, a laurel-wearing, bearded Samuel anoints the youthful David with a horn of oil while touching his head. For the occasion, David wears a gold ermine-trimmed cloak. Samuel is surrounded by his brothers, one of whom stands bearing a crown and sceptre. Steadman categorized this as a design for an engraving, supported by a related drawing (Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie, Besançon, inv. no. D.16). No impressions of such a print are known. The *Anointing of King David* could also have served as a tapestry design, along the lines of the *Story of King Solomon*, woven by Wauters circa 1660.

Van Diepenbeeck's choice of the oil sketch as the medium to convey his designs for monumental stained glass, engravings or tapestries signalled his Rubensian ambitions at the expense of the finished product. There is some draughtsman-like precision in the architecture, but the thick impasto laid on the figures is almost impressionistic. In the case of stained glass, a comparison with Van Diepenbeeck's window for St James' Antwerp highlights the incommensurability between the energy and freedom of the *Scourging* and the precision engineering of cutting glass and soldering it together (fig. 5). This suggests a certain antipathy towards the craft, confirmed by Van Diepenbeeck's well-documented quest to emancipate himself from it and become a painter proper.

In 1637, while still at work in St Paul's, the glass painters of Antwerp elected

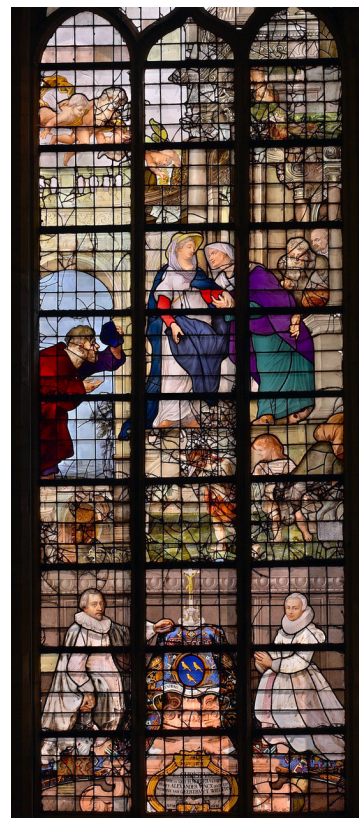


Fig. 5 Abraham van Diepenbeeck, *The Visitation*, 1644 (detail). Stained glass. Sint-Jacobskerk, Antwerp

Van Diepenbeeck as their officer. This he declined, seeking legal action and paying them eighteen florins in order to change profession. In 1638–39, Van Diepenbeeck re-enrolled in the Guild of St Luke as a painter. From then on, his work in stained glass was much sparser. Paid 400 florins per window, the Dominican commission was Van Diepenbeeck's last dash to prove his artistic mettle. While fitting out the choir with what must have been spectacular stained-glass panels, the artist was circulating the oil sketches to advertise his talents at the easel.

This article summarizes the author's recent research towards his PhD thesis, 'Rubens and the Dominican Church in Antwerp', undertaken at the Rubenianum in spring 2019 with kind permission from the director. The final chapter aims to reconstruct the decoration of the choir of St Paul's by the time of its consecration, under the leadership of Rubens and Ophovius. Van Diepenbeeck's stained-glass windows were integral to the original scheme. As a fellow-native of 's-Hertogenbosch, Ophovius may have personally appointed him for the task.

It is hoped that the publication of these sketches here and by Christie's will generate further interest in the stained-glass cycle, leading to more exciting discoveries. As for the windows, it is not impossible that they were installed in churches or private houses in Britain or elsewhere. Please direct any findings to [anws500@york.ac.uk](mailto:anws500@york.ac.uk).



Fig. 3 The choir of St Paul's Antwerp, seen from the high altar.



Fig. 4 Abraham van Diepenbeeck, *St Paul on Malta*, c.1633. Oil on panel, 34.5 x 27.5 cm. Private collection

## Project: New search for Flemish masterpieces

Last year the Rubenianum and the Printroom of the Royal Library of Brussels joined forces to compile a test list of seventeenth-century drawings to be considered for the List of Flemish Masterpieces. Objects and collections on this list are protected by the Flemish Masterpieces Decree. This year the Rubenianum is entrusted with the new task of expanding the list of sixteenth-century drawings already selected as masterpieces.

Project manager Sarah Van Ooteghem is therefore evaluating as many sixteenth-century drawings on Flemish territory as possible. Her survey of qualified objects will be presented to the 'Topstukkenraad'.

For more information, please visit our website (in Dutch) or contact Sarah Van Ooteghem at [sarah.vanooteghem@antwerpen.be](mailto:sarah.vanooteghem@antwerpen.be).

## Archive of Hans Gerhard Evers

### *Another Rubenianum Special Collection now inventoried*

Versatile and innovative are the two adjectives that most accurately encapsulate the work of the German art historian Hans Gerhard Evers (1900–1993).

During his lifetime, he researched many fields including Egyptology, architectural history, photography and art history. Evers gained the highest recognition for his studies in art history – in particular for his monograph on Peter Paul Rubens published in 1942. As a Rubens specialist, Evers was involved in numerous exhibitions and lectures. Information about his activities and research material on Rubens collected from the 1920s until the late 1970s are part of the



© The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund

Jan Brueghel, *View of Heidelberg across the Neckar River from the North-West*, c. 1588–89. Pen and brown ink, blue and brown wash. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, inv. 1995.15

Hans Gerhard Evers archive preserved at the Rubenianum. The inventory of this collection is now available in our online database, thanks to the effort of our former intern Francesca Biasio.

The files in this archive generally deal with specific iconographic themes or works by Rubens. In addition, there is a large amount of material on Rubens's social and political involvement and his family relationships. These documents inform us about Evers's particular approach to research: he focused on historical context to explain artistic production.

The archive also reveals Evers's interest in photography. Many photographs of works by Rubens were taken by the art historian himself, who was enthusiastic about this new art form and encouraged its use in the academic field. | *Elise Gacoms*

## From the world to Antwerp

The Rubenianum's international outreach becomes ever more apparent, not least in the talented interns we receive at the institute. After a motivated cohort of three Leuven students earlier this spring, our team has recently been reinforced by two skilled and enthusiastic art historians: Francesca Biasio from Università di Verona (left) and – as our first trainee from the New World – Maika Bahr from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah (right). Their work on the archives of Hans Evers and Walter Gibson, respectively, greatly added to our understanding of these unique resources.



## The Rubenianum Lectures

Sunday, 22 Sept. 2019, 11 am

**DR TINE LUK MEGANCK**  
Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels

### *Pieter Bruegel the Elder and the Art of Looking*

Like no other artist, Bruegel anticipated in his paintings how the beholder would look at them. Unravelling Bruegel's visual strategies brings us closer to the original viewing experience and sheds new light on the close network of Bruegel's patrons, especially Antwerp merchants and Brussels administrators.

The lecture is in Dutch and takes place at the Rubenianum. Tickets: [www.rubenianum.be](http://www.rubenianum.be).

## Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625): A Magnificent Draughtsman!

*Antwerp, Sniijders&Rockox House  
5 October 2019–26 January 2020*

We are delighted to present the first-ever retrospective exhibition of Jan Brueghel's drawings at the Sniijders&Rockoxhuis in Antwerp. While Pieter Bruegel's drawings are widely known, we have had to wait until now for the first thorough presentation of the drawings of his most talented descendant.

Pieter Bruegel the Elder having died when Jan was barely one year old, it was his grandmother, the watercolourist and miniaturist Mayken Verhulst, who nurtured his talent. She convinced him of his famous father's originality, and steered him towards Antwerp, where he emerged as one of the most important artists alongside Rubens.

Jan Brueghel not only painted, he drew too – and what a draughtsman he was! With his keen sense of observation and steady hand, he created a series of deft little gems. These are not preliminary studies, but stand-alone testimony to Jan's surroundings. His earliest drawings date from the time he spent in Italy between around 1588 and 1596. The city views he drew en route and in Rome are brilliant pieces of marketing – postcards *avant la lettre*. But getting to know Paul Bril and the work of his late brother, Matthijs, also made an indelible impression on him. Having returned to Antwerp, Brueghel focused on river and village scenes. He excelled in vast panoramas, in which he refers to the landscapes of his father. His work also offers a glimpse into the everyday life of rural people at the time.

Seventy drawings from major collections in Berlin, Paris, New York, Amsterdam, London, Stockholm and elsewhere tell the story. The exhibition is curated by Dr Terez Gerszi and Dr Louisa Wood Ruby. | *Hildegard Van de Velde*

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